

# How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks

60-Minute Module Series

## **O**RIENTATION Training Guide

**National Park Service  
Volunteers-In-Parks Program**



# **How To SUCCEED With VOLUNTEERS-IN-PARKS**

## **60-Minute Module Series**

Introduction  
Program Planning  
Needs Assessment  
Motivation  
Designing Jobs  
Recruitment  
Interviewing  
Orientation  
Training  
Safety Management  
Supervision  
Delegation  
Performance Reviews  
Recognition

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# INTRODUCTION

When a new volunteer first reports to work in your park, he or she will experience a high level of anticipation that relates to trying something new and exciting. There will also be the unanswered questions of whether the volunteer will feel wanted, needed, and appreciated. Whether you plan for it or not, orientation begins when the volunteer first walks through the door. For you, that moment may be a casual introduction followed by occasional bits of information that you give the volunteer whenever you think of them. Or it may be an enthusiastic welcome leading right into a formal orientation session on the National Park Service, the park, the park staff and the new job. For the volunteers, however, that first contact speaks volumes about how seriously you have planned for them, how glad you are they are there, and how much you value their time and contribution. That first impression will affect everything that follows.

# PURPOSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The **Purposes** of this module are to stress the importance of making new volunteers feel welcome and appreciated, and to give them basic information which will help get them started on their jobs.

## Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Make the right first impression when volunteers report for work.
2. Identify what information should be included in a volunteer orientation session.
3. Summarize the essential pieces of information that should be included in a volunteer manual or handbook.

# GENERAL NOTES TO TRAINER

1. This workshop is in a suggested format. Feel free, however, to personalize it to meet your needs.
2. This module is about giving volunteers a good introduction to the National Park Service, to your park, to your paid staff (and to other volunteers), and to the volunteers' job. A good orientation makes the right first impression by showing volunteers that you take them seriously. This module is also about providing necessary training for volunteers commensurate with their needs (including safety), and with their commitment to the job.
3. Involve the Superintendent and other key staff whenever possible in welcoming new volunteers. Tap into planned orientation sessions for paid staff.
4. Orientation should be given as soon as the volunteer starts working. Don't forget to involve experienced volunteers in helping to welcome and to train other volunteers.
5. Use the 12-minute orientation video "Welcome to the National Park Service" to help make your new volunteers feel part of the larger NPS family.

# WORKSHOP OUTLINE

**Transparency Handout      Section      Method of Presentation      Time**

<b>T-1   H-1 T-2</b>	<b>Introduction</b> Key Concepts	Lecture	2 minutes
<b>T-2   H-1</b>	<b>Concept 1</b> Orientation begins on the first day	Activity/Presentation	5 minutes
<b>T-2   H-1 T-3   H-2 H-3</b>	<b>Concept 2</b> Welcome and Introduce	Activity/Video	18 minutes
<b>T-2   H-1</b>	<b>Summary/Wrap-Up/ Evaluation</b>	Summary Remarks	5 minutes

**TOTAL TIME: 30 minutes**

# TRAINER'S NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

**Time: 2 minutes**

**T-1: Learning Objectives**

**T-2: Key Concepts**

**H-1: Key Concepts**

### **Presentation**

Begin with a brief statement on the purpose of orientation and show the transparency on Learning Objectives.

Summarize the two concepts that will be discussed.



## CONCEPT 1

**Time: 5 minutes**

**Whether formal or informal, orientation begins from the moment the volunteer first shows up for work and affects everything that follows.**

### **T-2: Key Concepts**

### **H-1: Key Concepts**

### **Quick Opening Activity**

Ask participants to share funny or nightmare experiences when they showed up to work at a paid job or as a volunteer, and their employer was obviously not ready for them. Then ask what kind of an impression that made on them. Stress the point that first impressions count and can have long-lasting affects.

## CONCEPT 2

**Time: 18 minutes**

**A complete orientation should welcome and introduce the new volunteer to the National Park Service, the park, the park staff, and the job.**

### **T-2: Key Concepts**

### **H-1: Key Concepts**

### **T-3: Basic Elements of VIP Orientation**

### **H-2: Basic Elements of VIP Orientation**

### **H-3: Volunteer Orientation Checklist**

**Video:**  
**“Welcome to the  
National Park  
Service”**  
**(video: 12 minutes)**

### **Group Activity**

Ask participants to describe some of the elements of the orientation they give to new volunteers. Refer to the checklist as a guide to make sure that all volunteers get off to a good start.

### **VIP Orientation Video**

Introduce the video by saying that it helps to welcome new volunteers to the National Park Service and to the Park Service family; to give an idea of the variety of sites, VIPs and VIP jobs that we have; to give some history of NPS and of the VIP Program; and to touch on mutual expectations of NPS and our volunteers. All volunteer supervisors should show the video to their new volunteers as part of their orientation.

## **SUMMARY/WRAP-UP/EVALUATION**

**Time: 5 minutes**

### **T-2: Key Concepts**

### **H-1: Key Concepts**

Restate the importance of making the right first impression by making volunteers feel welcome and appreciated, and by helping them to feel grounded in the workings of the agency and in their new job.

**END 30-MINUTE TRAINING**

## **SUGGESTION FOR EXPANDED ACTIVITIES**

1. Ask participants to prepare a detailed outline of an orientation plan for a specific volunteer job in their park.
2. Have participants develop an outline for a video designed to orient new volunteers to their park.
3. Ask participants to recall their most positive orientation experiences, either for a volunteer or paid position. Ask what elements of that orientation that impressed them the most.

## RESOURCES

1. McCurley, Steve and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing all the Resources of the Community*, 1996, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1807 Prairie, Downers Grove, IL 60515. (312) 964-1194.
2. Vineyard, Sue and Steve McCurley. *101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs*, 1986, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1807 Prairie, Downers Grove, IL 60515. (312) 964-1194.
3. Vineyard, Sue and Steve McCurley. *101 More Ideas for Volunteer Programs*, 1995, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1807 Prairie, Downers Grove, IL 60515.